

FEBRUARY 18, 1999 VOLUME 88 ISSUE 52

THE MCGILL DAILY

SPECIAL ISSUE

# black history month



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# CONTENTS

4 how do we come together?

5 a call for solidarity

6 angela davis  
continues to speak

7 black-canadian?

8 mount real's spoken word scene

10-11 discussion with george elliot clarke

12 africana studies committee

13 turn back the clock

30 years of student protest

14

african diplomacy

15

creative space

16-17

black talk

18

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editorial offices:

3480 MCTAVISH ST., MONTREAL, QC., ROOM B-03, H3A 1X9

business and advertising office:

3480 MCTAVISH ST., MONTREAL, QC., ROOM B-07, H3A 1X9

email: DAILY@GENERATION.NET editorial: (514)-398-6784

fax: (514)-398-8318 business/advertising: (514)-398-6790

co-ordinating editor:

VERDA COOK

vcCook@star.com

co-ordinating news editor:

JEFF WEBBER

jwebber40po-box.mcgill.ca

co-ordinating culture editor:

ANNA ALFREDSON

aalfre0po-box.mcgill.ca

news editors:

LOUISE ADDARIO-BERRY

laddar0po-box.mcgill.ca

JASON CHOW

jchow10po-box.mcgill.ca

culture editors:

JULIA DALEY

freeradicab@hotmail.com

features editors:

BEN ERRETT

ben\_errer@hotmail.com

KELLY JACKSON

kjack20po-box.mcgill.ca

photo editor:

CÉLINE HEINRECKER

ch3p@musab.mcgill.ca

layout and design co-ordinators:

AMY PAPALIAS

apapac0po-box.mcgill.ca

JAMES YAP

kurstondead@virvanza.com

office manager:

APRIL WASSAYKEESIC

aw2320po-box.mcgill.ca

défil français:

PATRICK PRIMEAU

pprimeau@hotmail.com

black history month co-ordinators:

AKIN ALAGA, VERDA COOK

contributors:

AKIN ALAGA, BLACK CAUCUS, HIRUT EYOB, GILABE

GITHINGA, AMAL GODATALLA, CHANTELE JONES, JESSICA

LIM, POILANNA PYNE, DEBBIE YOUNG

business manager:

MARIAN SCHIRER

assistant business manager:

PARVATI NEOGI

advertising management:

LETTY MATTEO, BORIS SHEDIMY

advertising layout and design:

MARK BROOKER

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NO KILL MCGILL?

To the Daily:

QPIRG's push for a Green McGill should move beyond the "3 R's" (renew, reuse, recycle) to other concerns relevant to nature and the environment. Here are three:

Non-human animals continue to be killed in McGill labs. Should not a Green McGill be a No-kill McGill? The total number of animals killed at McGill, in its entire history, must be in the tens of thousands (or more). Imagine if you received a request from a McGill lab to give up your companion animal

to the cause of science, for the greater good. Yet the animals killed at McGill are no less precious than the dogs, cats, rabbits, rats, etc., that have become our "pets." QPIRG's political histories of McGill, excellent as they are, have not touches this largely invisible aspect of life at McGill.

There is the smoking situation at Shatner. Once the cafeteria closes, there is no public smoke-free space in the building, except for the theatre. QPIRG has never taken an interest in tobacco, even though it is such a major corporate killer product. The fight against the tobacco

industry is even more important that the campaign for fair trade coffee, as important as that is.

Finally, Chapters has brought magazines into the bookstore which advocate killing as a sport, that is, hunting and fishing magazines. While I don't question Chapter's "right to sell", why give them added opportunity to profit from the animal killing industry? Of course, someone might then ask me: what about the meat sold in campus cafeteria? Doesn't this contradict a Green McGill? I believe it does, but even without the impossible ideal of a vegetarian McGill, there is obviously a huge amount we can do.

Shloime Perel  
McGill Alumnus

A HOPE FOR UTOPIA

One day special issues devoted to colour and gender will no longer be necessary as all humanity will be treated fairly.

David Sommer Rovins

The Daily welcomes any and all comment, criticism, and letters to the editor. Please drop off at our office in B-03 Shatner, or email us at daily@generation.net, or fax us at 398-8318. Letters should be no more than 300 words.



## COMMENT

# BLACK HISTORY MONTH

## HOW DO WE COME TOGETHER?

THROUGH AKIN ALAGA AND VERDA COOK  
CO-ORDINATORS OF THIS SPECIAL ISSUE

A: Well, first of all, we lie when we say we are black...

V: We lie? Who lies? We as black people...oops Akin I just called us black...

A: Alright, it's true we don't lie but rather have been lied to, about, and even more importantly we respond to and seek to counter another directly related lie which is the idea of a white identity or a white people. The point I'm trying to foreground here is that the idea of blackness cannot be separated from whiteness and more specifically, white supremacy.

Historically, it is more accurate to say that we have been *blackened* and it is important that we understand this, as we come together to create this "Black History" Month issue, in order not to obscure the essential differences that revolve around our similarities. In essence, it is dangerous to subscribe to an identity, to even attempt to bolster an identity, that is founded simply in response to slavery, colonialism, and/or racism

V: I agree with you, but I also want to include the perspective of the first black communities. We have a history of incorporation. When we came here, we intermarried with Ojibway peoples, with poor European people and that history has continued. This may be based on our isolation, but when a black person comes here we have a tendency to attempt to incorporate them into this community. In addition, this is related to the fact that we are and have been relegated to the margins. However, lately, we have reached a situation where it seems that this black community is not valid. What people are saying is that I don't necessarily want to subscribe to this.

A: But really the fact is that this 'Black' incorporation sounds too close to assimilation. It feels like a sort of counter assimilation in response to dominant white mainstream attempts. So, in effect, you have communities coming into Canada that are black skinned and referred to as Black this or African that, who neither want to be assimilated by a Black Canadian culture

nor a white Canadian culture, further they do not they want to be exploited or oppressed and they need to align themselves along the lines of that oppression (marginalization), rather than defining themselves according to some mythic identity.

V: Or a cultural expectation of "blackness." We are both living in Canada and you are Yoruba-Canadian and I'm a Black-Canadian/Finnish woman and we feel a sense of alliance and what is that alliance going to be based on, if its not on Black cultural expectations of assimilation?

A: Historically, it would not have mattered to the white dominant structure who, exactly, I was or am, whether that be Yoruba, Gha, Zulu, Xhosa, the point was, and to a certain extent it still is, that I was someone who was there to be exploited especially along the lines of my dark skin. So that would have been where we would have united...

V: Culturally we are different but politically we are in the same situation.

A: Yeah, economically we have also been relegated to the same position. And if we try to create some sort of pseudo-common culture in order to answer political and economic questions or problems, then we are prescribing the wrong diagnosis for our ailment.

V: So where we need to take this in terms of the 'blackened' community is a political alliance versus a cultural assimilationist mentality where new groups are not expected to integrate into a black-Canadian culture.

A: That would simply be the first step, ideally the next step would be to align ourselves with First Nations communities who also have the same sort of historical oppression and of course any other embattled minority group.

V: Unless we start to realize that our alliances are political, for specific purposes, then we are not going to get to the root of the problem, which is an attitude of exploitation.

And if you don't address that problem, then within our own communities we will continue that attitude of exploitation. We will never get to the place that we both would seek to be.

A: Yeah a sort of vicious cycle sequence and this highlights the tendency to exploit as one that exists within the 'black' community and the white community. Further, this has the effect of exposing exploitation as a *human* problem as opposed to a black versus white problem. The fiction of black and white has been used to obscure the facts.

V: Why do you find yourself aligned with me then? I have problems thinking its just a political alliance, when I see you, as a 'blackened' person, I know you feel the same feelings of dehumanization which I have felt, and my family has experienced. And in that sense we do have that identity and it's not only based on a political agendas, but on a shared experience.

A: Exactly but is a shared *human* experience of being blackened, of blackness. It says a lot about the fluidity of reality and identity. We

both share a common insight based on our experience on how reality can be distorted.

V: Also I think it is a quest for humanity. I know that you will see humanity in me, as a black person,...not necessarily as a woman, not necessarily for the other things that I am dehumanized as...

That you will see me and affirm my humanity in a society which has denied it, which presumes my inferiority or embraces me as an 'exotic'. In a society that sees race as such an object of dehumanization, I seek that in you and I think you seek that in me as well.

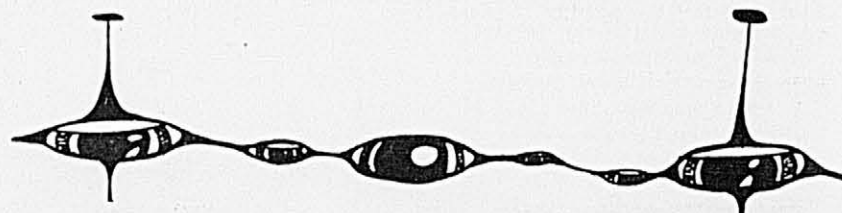
A: In other words my humanity, despite the fact that I have been dehumanized along the artificial lines of skin colour allows me to testify to your humanity. My blackenedness simply allows me to see you through your blackenedness also as (above all) a human being, not as having 'soul' or any other mythic cultural similarity.

V: And it only works to a certain extent, cuz we have other aspects of our identity, we are not *just* black

people.

A: Exactly because there might be moments when I can't see you anymore. In other words the human mind has a tendency for exclusion and sometimes I have that tendency, so whereas in some instances I could see you because you are a blackened person, there are other times that I can't see you in another mode of thought, where I am excluding you despite the fact that you are black too. Perhaps it might be because you are a woman.

V: Or a Muslim or because you speak a language, even metaphorically, which I do not understand. These differences can be admitted without the danger of losing each other. Once we realize this, we can no longer be mispackaged and more importantly, no longer would we define our own selves in opposition to a fabrication of 'white', and so this becomes a stronger position. We do not need to 'rejoice' in these differences necessarily, because they should be anticipated. But we do have, and do feel, lines through which we can come together, and in this specific example, can create a special issue which rehumanizes us.





# INFIGHTING AT EXCALIBUR

## UPROAR OVER ATTEMPTS TO COMPROMISE

### BLACK ISSUE

The following is an editorial written by the co-ordinators of the Afrikan Liberation Month Special Issue of the Excalibur, York University's student paper. As a result of this editorial, the issue which came out February 3 of this year, was without the consultation of the co-ordinators, pulled off the stands by the editor-in-chief.

It outlines the internal opposition confronted in the production of their 8-year-old issue.

Since these events, some members and supporting staff of Excalibur, those who were involved in the Afrikan Liberation Month Issue, have become targets and their commitment to the paper has been questioned.

Our strength is in the numbers of our allies and so it is necessary to share with the larger community the experiences that these students and journalists are facing within the Excalibur.

The past few months have been tumultuous and insightful for us here at Black Caucus. It should be said from the onset that the issue which you have before you barely made it into existence. Why, you ask? Some members of Excalibur's Editorial Board were recently proposing the reduction of the Afrikan Liberation Month Issue into a mere supplement of 3-5 pages. According to these Editorial Board members, the 8-year-old issue had become a concern, given its "exclusion" of other racial groups within the York community. The swift response by both Black Caucus and other concerned members from York's student body to this absurd proposal was nothing short of outrage. In a school that claims to welcome diversity, shouldn't its newspaper be embracing the Afrikan Liberation Month Issue, instead of decreasing it? How would reducing the issue, which prides itself in equal opportunity and the upliftment of marginalized voices lead to the inclusion of other racial groups? Needless to say, nobody was fooled.

Perhaps we would have felt better if Excalibur's tradition was one free

of prejudice. As late as 1990, issues of Excalibur had to be withdrawn from the stands because of editorial content deemed racially offensive to blacks. The following year saw the call for the resignation of the Editor and Assistant Editor of Excalibur when a Black History Month feature was found to contain racial stereotyping and "broad, unsupported generalizations about the black community". The outcry which followed both events was in response to the lack of sensitivity to minority issues exhibited by Excalibur. This led to the formation of Black Caucus, geared to bringing Black issues "from the back page to the front." Despite the issue's widespread approval and support from the student body at large, the recent actions of a few Editorial Board members sadly reveal that, with regard to minority representation, little has changed.

The recent conflict between Excalibur's predominantly white Editorial Board and Black Caucus should be of interest to anyone concerned with the general state of race relations in Canada today. It would appear that the Editorial Board's rationale for the issue's reduction (read: elimination) was if the black student body was entitled to an issue dedicated to their experience, then all other minority groups should be, too. In other words, the matter of minority representation is an all or nothing affair. As evidenced here, demands made by countless minority groups for better and more accurate representation in the media can be manipulated in such a way that no one gets their voice heard at all. Ultimately, the status quo is maintained and the people who are truly in need of fair recognition are ignored.

Masking their true intentions to marginalize the Afrikan Liberation Month Issue with idealistic notions of integration, some Editorial Board members even suggested that reduction of the paper would allow Black Caucus to "become one" with Excalibur. We fail to realize how reducing the paper to a few pages and tucking it neatly within the regular paper for one week is going to pro-

mote this integration. It seems more like a "tucking away" of our issues, and a move that would shift the locus of control from Black Caucus editors into the hands of Excalibur's editorial staff; something that would not "integrate" black writers, but would suppress them.

Until the last moments leading up to production of this issue, members of the Editorial Board continued their efforts to thwart and complicate the completion of the paper. Various tactics included attempts at minimizing pages, decreasing colour content, and challenging the integrity of submitted articles. This all culminated in the shocking (or not so shocking) walk-out of the Editor-in-chief and Managing Editor.

Although these dismal and trying circumstances have taken their toll on Black Caucus, we remained determined to put forth the best issue possible. This series of events has taught us all a valuable lesson: mainly that, in the end, those who share similar goals and convictions must stay together in the face of adversity.

We titled this issue "Transitions" because we are convinced that the time has come for us to move forward. This will not be possible, however, unless there is a collective effort to address matters that affect us all in this world; a world which is not a given, but a problem. A problem is a challenge and an opportunity at the same time. The challenge is to make this world a better place for future generations; and the opportunity is from now until the day we die.

*The experiences of the Black Caucus at The Excalibur cannot be dealt with in isolation. As the co-ordinators of the Daily's equivalent issue, the Black History Month issue, we support the concerns raised by Black Caucus. Even more importantly, as staff of The McGill Daily, which stands for ideals that have been threatened by those holding the power at The Excalibur, we stand in solidarity.*

For further information, help, or advice, contact Black Caucus at (416) 736-2100 ext. 60272 or (416) 812-2460 or e-mail them at [cac@interlog.com](mailto:cac@interlog.com)

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# IMPRISONING MIND & BODY

## ANGELA DAVIS CONTINUES TO SPEAK OUT

BY JESSICA LIM

The following is an excerpt from a press conference held with black revolutionary, feminist, and intellectual Angela Davis at a demonstration named Jericho '98. The Washington protest was organized to oppose the detainment of over 150 political prisoners in the United States and Canada. Both countries still deny the presence of such prisoners within their prisons.

What do you think about the traditional civil rights' movement and the lack of its' presence here at this type of demonstration?

A.D.: People who have been reluctant to associate themselves with campaigns that place prisoners at the centre [of the struggle] will have no other choice. They will have no other choice. They will have to join us. I think this is a movement that young people will want to join. It's nice to see so many young people here. I think there needs to be more young people up front in the leadership, making the calls for radical change. I'm actually very excited, I think we're on the verge of something important, something exciting. If we don't do it now, when will we ever be able to do it?

Do you see the spirit of the 1960's in today's youth activism?

A.D.: Well, I would like to call it a spirit of the latter 90's. Because I think there is a tendency to rely too much on the 60's to do the work that needs to be done today. And many of us did important work in the 60's. But over thirty years have gone by. These are new conditions.

The Black middle class is the largest its ever been - much because of the 60's movement. What is your consideration of their role and responsibility in the movement at this point?

A.D.: I hope that the increasing numbers of people who consider themselves part of the black middle class will get involved in this movement. Many people who are part of this new black middle class are just a paycheck away from this staple middle class. I do think that this is

a major problem in the black communities. Along with the abolition of the welfare system, there is a failure to stand together. We've got a lot of work to do to persuade not

those people identify with the plight of the almost two million people who are behind bars in the U.S. In fact, more than thirty years ago when many of us were involved in

the campaign to free Huey Newton, and Bobby Seale...

and then myself, can remember that it was George Jackson and others who were arrested not for political reasons but for charges of theft or something like that.

George Jackson argued that we needed not only a movement to free political prisoners but also to overthrow the criminal justice system, the role that the prison system plays as a repressive apparatus. And so it was actually because of

of the past have only strengthened the repressive character of the prisons. Prisons were initially supposed to be these humane alternatives to corporal punishment. And now, aside from the death penalty, imprisonment is the most repressive aspect of punishment.

But that's because the people demanded it. Over the last twenty years the people have been demanding that there be more punishment.

A.D. But where do those ideas come from? The inability on the part of so many people to think critically about what is happening in this country is largely a result of the politicians and the media and the ideas about crime that circulate about crime, and the fear of crime circulate not only in the politicians' speeches but also in popular culture. We are living in a crime saturated environment. But that crime saturated environment is in a large part constructed by the popular culture around us. Most people who are afraid of crime are the ones who are the least likely to be victims of crime. I think we have to challenge it on that level. This means that we have to conduct an educational campaign. We have to demystify these ideas that hold people captive to the notion that prison is the only solution that's available.

The prison population of women has been increasing. What are your comments on this? Why do you think this is so?

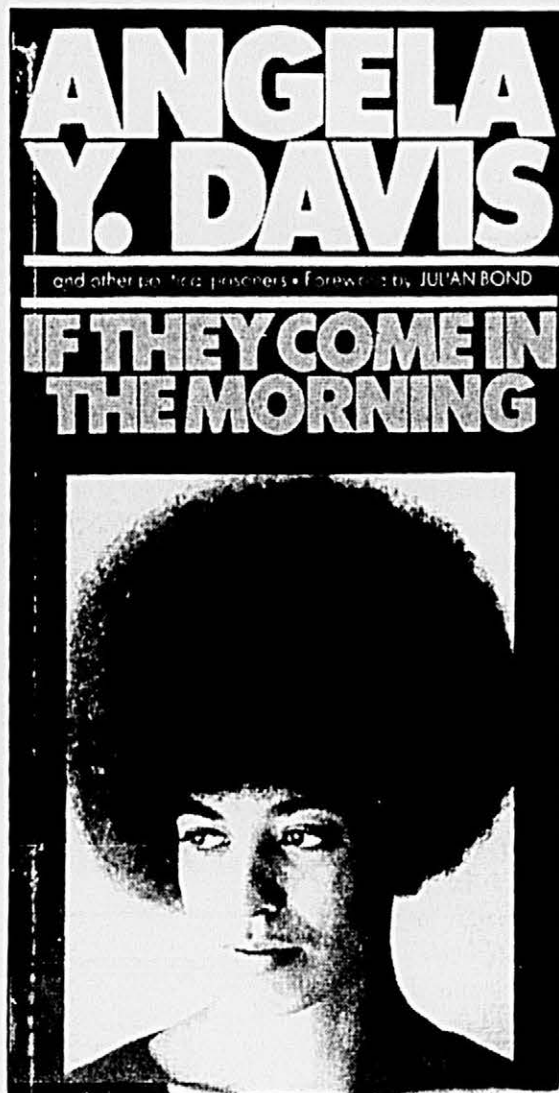
A.D. The increase in the population of women within this prison industrial complex is about twice that of the increase in the population of men. I think that in the future we're going to see an even larger number of women going to prison particularly with the abolition of the welfare system and particularly given the fact that there aren't the kinds of jobs that the women who no longer receive

AFDC (welfare) can survive on. There is something I think we need to keep in mind and that is, historically, women have been punished in the home...within patriarchal structures. They have been beaten by their husbands, their fathers and their brothers. That has been the nature of women's punishment. It has been private. Male punishment has been public, in the prisons, in the penitentiaries. As the patriarchal structures begin to be challenged, it means that more women are subject to public punishment. I think it's really important to make the connection between violence against women in the home and the public punishment of women in the prison system.

What message do you want the youth to take away from Jericho?

A.D. This is the moment of the youth. Only the young people can help us out of this crisis. I know that there are wonderful veterans, people who have been in the movement for twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years here, and it's quite amazing to see so many people whom I've known since the 60's. But this is the time for young people to take leadership. The rest of us who have the experience, we have the experience. And we have to share that experience. But the youth shouldn't expect us to give [them] leadership because I don't think older people can give younger people the kind of leadership that's needed. As a matter of fact, the youth know a lot more than we do about what is possible now and what needs to be done. And I think young people are far more willing to take risks, and to do the kind of courageous things that are needed...So I'm willing to say that if the youth provide the leadership, then I will definitely follow.

This interview was reprinted due to popular demand. It first appeared in the April 2, 1998 issue of the Daily.



only middle class people but working class people as well that we need to build a movement in which prisoners play a role not just as the objects of our organizing and work. We don't want to be latter day missionaries but we want to argue that people who are behind bars are not different from people in the free world. There are horrible people behind bars, and there are horrible people in the free world. We have to break this myth about the criminal, the racist myth of the criminal, which unfortunately influences the people.

Do you think it's wrong for people to lump the political prisoners movement in with the general prisoners movement?

A.D.: I don't think so. There are people who are in prisons specifically for their political beliefs and political activities. Surely all of

the struggles to free political prisoners that we learned how to develop this kind of analysis of the prison system. And I don't think that it makes sense simply to call for [attention to] political prisoners because [the prison complex] is devouring ever larger numbers of people, particularly people of colour. Certainly people of colour and the working class. And the people who are in prisons for political reasons are there precisely because they have supported working class people and poor people and Black people and Native Americans and Asians and Latinos. So there's an organic connection.

What do you think of the reforms in the prison system?

A.D. Unfortunately the reform movements



# DOES AN AFRICAN-CANADIAN IDENTITY EXIST?

ACADEMICS DISCUSS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE BLACK IN CANADA

BY CHANTELE JONES

**B**lack people live in Canada—that is a known common fact. To claim that an African-Canadian identity exists in Canada, one that can actually be related to, is an entirely different matter.

Creating a black identity in Canada is made difficult by the onslaught of American culture where African-American identity is already prominent. At first, this distinction between African-American and African-Canadian would seem simple. However, it becomes evident that the African-Canadian identity is fragmented and complex.

In the US, new citizens are referred to primarily as Americans whereas Canadians are given the opportunity to maintain a second national identity. Many diaspora groups co-exist within the Black community: Jamaican-Canadians, Haitian-Canadians, Trinidadian-Canadians, Nigerian-Canadians, etc. There are also indigenous groups of blacks whose families have lived in Canada for several generations. They are concentrated primarily in Nova Scotia and Ontario as a result of the Loyalist and Underground Railroad influxes from the US in the 18th and 19th centuries. With so many diverse backgrounds, how then can "Africa-Canadian" identity be defined?

Dr. George Elliot Clarke, visiting professor of African Canadian Literature at McGill, claimed that despite the wide array of labels blacks apply to themselves the Canadian experience has influenced the development of an African-Canadian consciousness. Using the example of recent black immigrants from Africa or the Carribean, Clarke said that "because of their experience here, they gradually adopts 'Canadian' practices." He added that this can be seen in the works of black immigrant writers. According to Clarke, their focus is primarily on "there" or "back home," but eventually, their focus alters and becomes more recognizably Canadian. As for second-generation Canadians, Clarke believed that "where you grow up defines who you are; parental reminders and efforts to instill values and culture of the 'home land' influences the child, but only to the extent that the Canadian context allows." Consequently, an African-Canadian identity is formed.

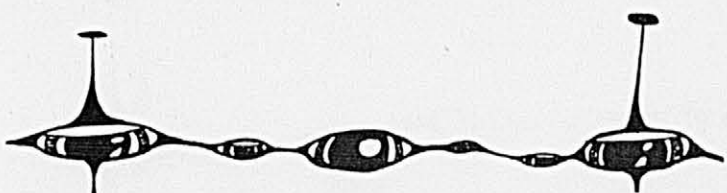
However, according to one McGill student, Karen Richardson,

there is no single African-Canadian identity, nor should blacks try to create one. Richardson believes that presently, there lacks substantial integration and blacks in Canada tend to "hold on to their immigrant backgrounds, it would take many generations [in Canada] before there will be homogenization." She referred to Canada as a largely immigrant country. Different cultures interact "but maintain separate identities." For her, identity is multiple—that is what being Canadian is all about.

Similarly, Kory Brewster who studies Physiology at McGill, believes that within the black community, there is no real significant sense of identity. "Our place of origin divides us, our colour unites us externally, but we are internally segregated," he said. Brewster claimed that the skin colour is enough for whites to categorize, but within the community, skin colour is not a sufficient trait for homogenization. "I do believe that there is an identity, for blacks in Canada, but it is not uniform. What is grounds for categorization is only on the surface."

Second-year student of English Literature Akin Alaga suggests that blacks in Canada are overly influenced by American cultural imperialism. For him, there is too much emphasis placed on finding an "identity" and consequently many blacks adopt the American conception of Blackness. "We can't apply black-American tools of consciousness to a Canadian setting," said Alaga. "There is an identity in Canada, but as we are using the wrong, American tools, it is difficult to locate." He argued that there are adequate differences between Canada and the United States, specifically the Canadian tradition of covert forms of racism and domination as opposed to the American explicit racism. For Alaga, this fundamental difference alone makes it impossible to analyze Canada and the US in the same context.

Dionne Brand, the critically acclaimed black-Canadian author of Caribbean descent believed that regardless of colour, Canadian identity is made up of a variety of different cultures, ethnicities and experiences: "Canadian identity is always being claimed by whatever wave of immigration preceded another.... Perhaps merely landing here two hundred years ago or two decades ago or two years ago doesn't matter."



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# SOUNDS OF BLACK- NESS IN THE CITY

## THE MONTREAL BLACK SPOKEN WORD SCENE

BY GHIABE GUIBINGA

In West African society, where many of today's black Canadians come from and the place that many New World black people were uprooted from, it was the griot

Debbie Young, a local poet, explains that the black spoken word scene encompasses about a dozen poets. This number probably underestimates the size

action and community strengthening. Issues such as love, unity, gender relations, and critiques of marketed and commercialized society are central to the scene.

One all encompassing theme is the denunciation of social injustice. These same issues resonate inside the white spoken word scene as well.

### A segregated milieu

Despite the fact that both white and black spoken word scenes often address issues pertaining to social injustice, democracy, and

police brutality, the poetic scene is relatively segregated, both for the artist and for the audience. The transcultural bridge between the white and black scene is not often traveled.

According to Marc, a volunteer at Arcotheque de Montréal, the poetic readings that take place there every Wednesday rarely feature black poets. "When they do," he adds "the audience is ninety-nine percent white."

Kellough notes that "black people rarely attend spoken word shows featuring mainly white poets." Young, who has had the opportunity of performing for both audiences, concurs.

### Charisma or Substance

Much black artistic creations are filled with emotion, through gestures, tones, and fluctuations in volumes. This has been a strong critique of black artists

for years. This criticism is shared by Akin Alaga, a Montreal-based poet.

"The Montréal spoken word black scene is sometimes too much emotion with few substances", he adds that "this is a controversial view of the scene." He deplores that in some poetic performances, the emphasis is too often put on the charisma of the performer instead of the message itself.

Another school of thought, which includes Young, asserts that the performer and the message are intimately linked, and cannot be dissociated. What characterizes spoken word is the ritual, the relationship between performer and audience. The emotion, the tone and the loudness a performer is putting into the poetical reading have impact on how the message is captured.

Kellough, without denouncing the role of performance, agrees that if not properly integrated, it can distract the audience from the literary quality.

### A larger circle

The winter release of the compilation entitled *Worldlife: Tales of the Underground Griots* is an indication that a healthy black spoken word scene does exist in Montréal and throughout Canada.

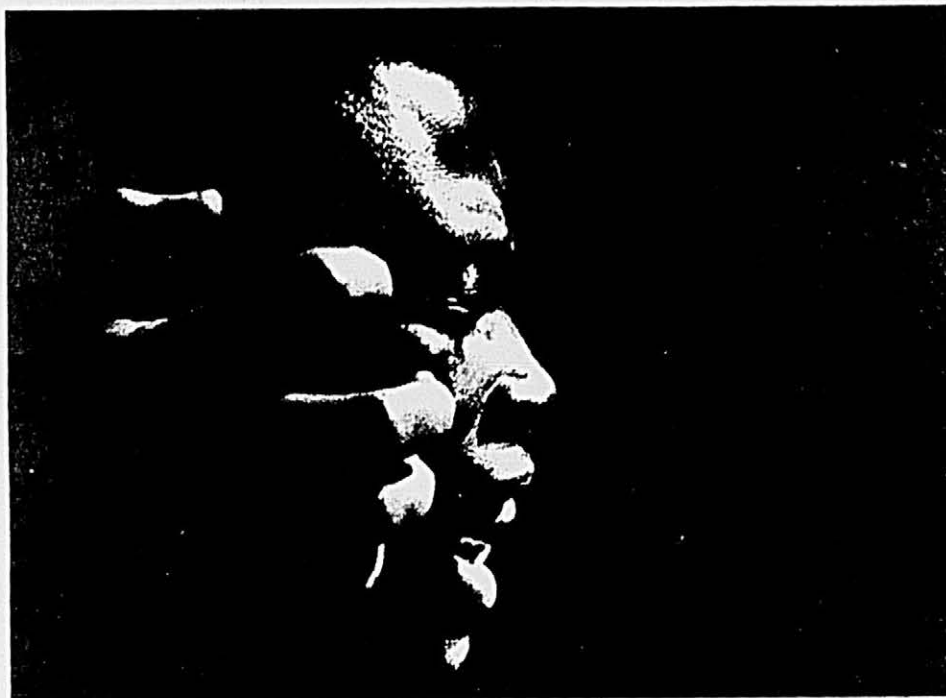
The recent creation of spoken

word company Fonics and Funk by Young and other poets is a positive signal of the institutionalization of the community. The company is devoted to the promotion and the fostering of young black poets.

As Kellough's states "the future of the black spoken word scene in Montréal resides" not simply in the individual performances but "in exchange and interaction between artists, through poetical workshops and performance, and through re-

cording and publishing their works."

*Fonics & Funk, a performance poetry event will be held on Friday, February 26 at De Seve cinema, Concordia University 1400 de Maisonneuve O.*



who collected and disseminated stories both ancient and new. They served as the collective memory of the people. A library of spoken words. The griot however was also the praise-singers, storytellers, and entertainer. And, Yet, none of these descriptions quite capture the influence they have in almost every aspect of the black culture. For New World slaves in the face of subjugation, this oral tradition has continued as the only means to express and teach that we are, we have been and we will continue to be. The griot has passed through centuries, over seas, and has found a voice to speak through many different bodies.

### The Montréal black poetic scene

Montréal has its own modern griot in black spoken word artists. They play an important part in promoting a strong sense of identity in the city and breaking out of the stereotypes that dehumanize black communities

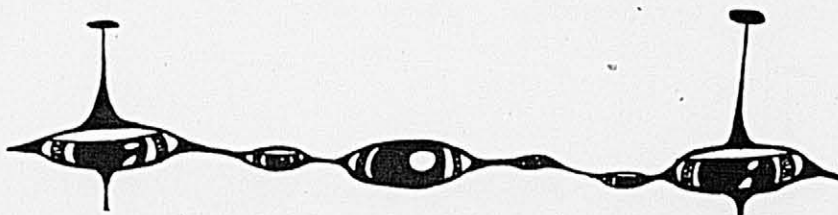
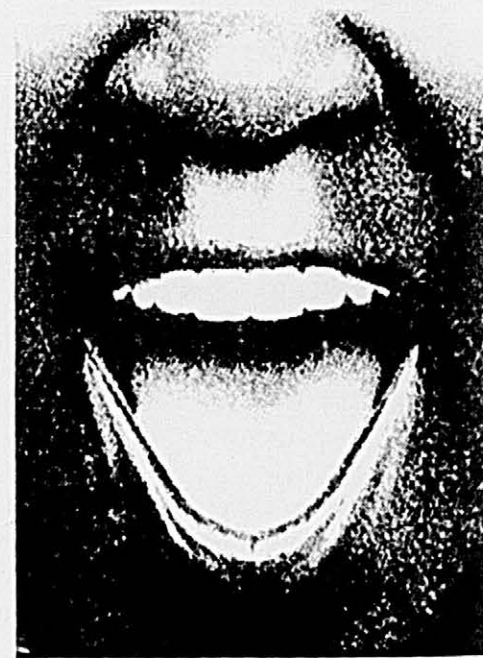
of the community given the transient nature of the scene. The estimate also does not include the plethora of rap and reggae artists who draw on poetics. Young adds, "It is not astonishingly present but certainly not absent."

Spoken word shows can be found regularly at the Yellow Door, Le Cirque, Isart (temporarily closed), and Artothèque de Montréal.

### Crosses and cruxes

The issue of identity is important for any artist. The artistic creation is often a way of discovering and rediscovering the self. The everlasting issue of "Who am I and what it means to be black in multi-cultural Canadian society" says Kaie Kellough, local poet, is particularly central for black poets.

The topics addressed are not simply about the search for individuality but about human inter-





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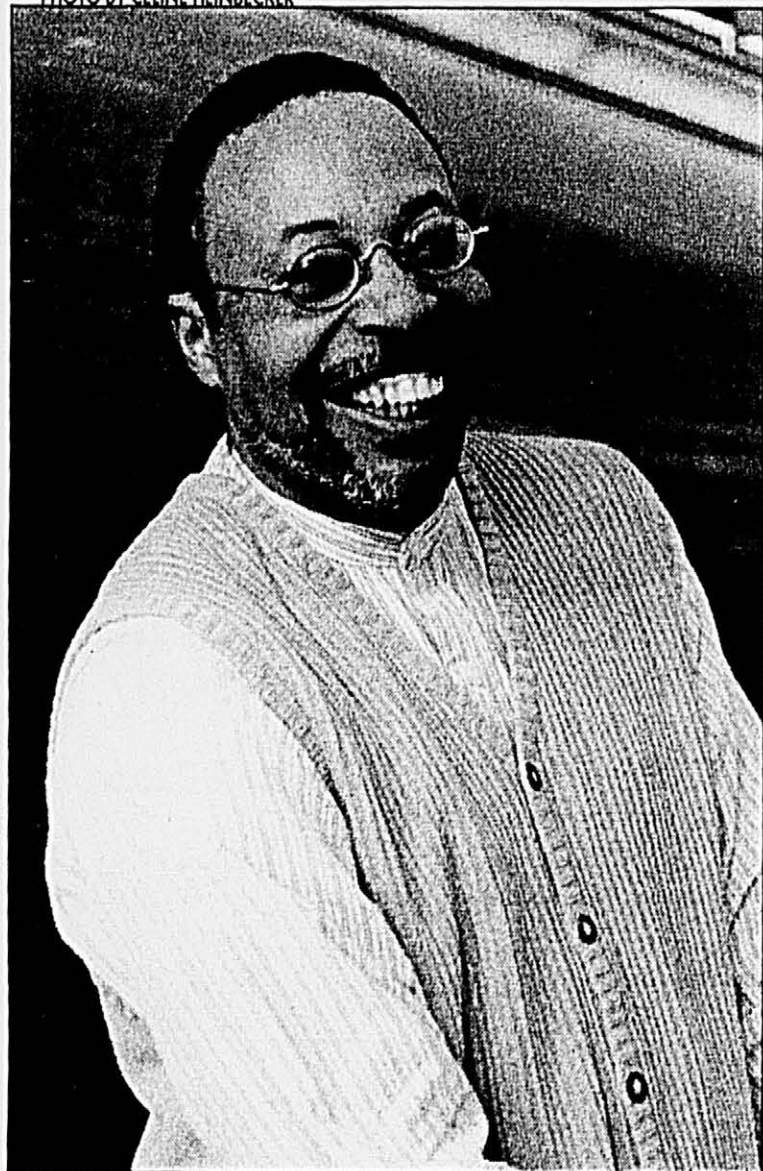
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# A CONVERSATION WITH PROFESSOR GEORGE ELLIOT CLARKE

PHOTO BY CÉLINE HEINBECKER



VISITING PROFESSOR GEORGE ELLIOT CLARKE

BY AKIN ALAGA

**A**: Let's start with the issue of why African-Canadians need to build their own institutions.

**C**: Well, we have a terrific need for such institutions across the board - ranging from medical institutions to community based and sensitive legal assistance, to educational institutions that respond to the multicultural fabric and the bilingual characteristics of the African-Canadian community. Every single career that you can name requires some means of organized African-Canadian endeavor to assist other Black people until such a time when the vice or disease of racism is done away with. Another motivation for institutional support that we create stems from the necessity to reinforce our own self esteem. A final incentive stems from not having to remain dependent on other people. That is not to say to give up our rights to request and demand community help, let's say in the economic sector, although we do have to continue to insist, we still need to be able to build some structures for ourselves because it is not in anybody else's interest to do it for us and if they do do it for us it is going to be to suit their agenda not ours.

**A**: What do you feel are the insufficiencies within the present Canadian institutions available to us as Black Canadians and in particular the educational institutions?

**C**: This is a great example because these institutions are not there necessarily to make sure that Black kids, or people who identify as Black or of African heritage, receive an education that revolves around their culture, or which is culture focused, and not Afro-centric necessarily, but certainly focused on what they feel comfortable with and that at the same time their mental and spiritual well being is enhanced by. Of course if you come from the majority group into the educational system it is going to help enhance your sense of self esteem because it is the majority's history and pantheon of heroes that are extolled when put forward in the classroom and this is not necessarily .. the case for people from other ethnic or racial backgrounds.

...and Although I know there is an effort particularly during this month, African heritage month, to try to inject a little bit more of Black heritage into the educational system, this is really a band aid approach. It is nice and it is important that this happens but there is so much more that needs to be done. Black children need to have a good basic

schooling in who they are and the problem is that Black people often feel alienated simply because they often do not have a sense of what is at stake or what they have in terms of a stake in this society and that is not always made clear or sometimes is even distorted by larger society and so it is very important that we undertake the educating, the building, the nurturing of our young people's minds and I'm not saying this in any racist way at all, it is just that when you are an embattled minority you have to do things to enhance your own presence, you have to be able to strengthen your own psychology, and you can't expect the majority or the majorities to do that for you, because they may or may not,

**A**: Do you think that this lack of African-Canadian institutions is partly responsible for the contradictions within Afro-Canadian elites for example I read an essay of yours "Clarke vs Clarke" that was concerned with Tory elitism as a contradiction within Clarke's political protest agenda?

**C**: Well, I think that it is a contradiction especially if, on the one hand, you want to argue for some kind of racial unity, and then, on the other hand, you want to say that we have to allow for class stratification in the community. I'm not saying that this is wrong. But you must realize that it is going to be more difficult to organize on the basis of racial unity if in fact you have class stratification at the centerpoint of your own ideology....though I'll make this point in his

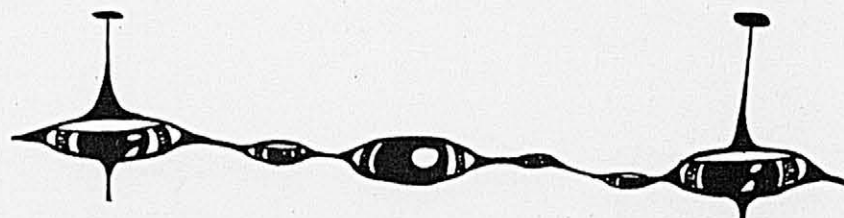
defense, what I like about his work is that it shows that there is class disunity among African-Canadians and that it is facile to simply argue for unity as a means of papering it over. If there is going to be any kind of organizing it has to be structured around the fact that there is disunity. One has to understand that it is very difficult to argue for unity just for unity's sake and that effective organizing has to understand the divisions within the community and not to paper them over by appeals for "unity" But rather grapple with them and understand that they are real and that we as a people can have our allegiances based upon those divisions.

.... The fact is that we really are, to use Joe Clark's phrase, is a community of communities. And to return to Austin Clarke, what I object to in his work is his failure, in my mind, to make it really clear that although there is a need for unity within the Afro-Canadian community there are also divisions... and so there is that appeal for unity without really tussling with the effect class stratification is going to have on the call for unity. However, what is valuable in his work is that such a distinction does occur. and that all I ask is that there be more careful thought about what that really entails. in terms of any kind of mass mobilization.

**A**: What do you perceive to be the financial situation of the Afro-Canadian community, in terms of power and organization?

**C**: Well, I'm no expert in this field, but what I will say is what we learn from our African-American counterparts is that even the poorest communities have access to thousands of dollars and that this wealth could be poured into economic activity to enhance the community if it were properly harnessed.

In Canada we are beginning to see in places like Toronto, I don't know as much about the Montreal situation as I do Toronto, there definitely is a business base that is coalesced. With that we finally have the basis for some sort of greater economic activity or unity to encourage job creation and this sort of thing is absolutely essential in order to create any kind of even semi-independent economy that can absorb people and give them jobs which will have the effect of eliminating the feeling of being totally dependent on the larger mainstream economy, which is not to say that they shouldn't because of course they should they are contributing to it, but at the same time almost every other ethnicity in this country has its own culturally based economy no matter how small it may be and Afro-Canadians need to set up their own mini economy in order to provide a





# WHAT'S GOING ON? WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? WHO? WHY?

basis for greater penetration and participation in the larger economy.

A: Black Capitalism?

C: Yeah, I guess I am talking about Black Capitalism. But the reason why is the Capitalist system, no matter how much people on the progressive or left side may attack it, the fact is that it is here and looks as if it is here to stay, at least temporarily..... and given the fact it is a reality with which we are faced, I think it is important to participate in that system as much as possible while making sure there is a degree of nationalism around that participation. In that sense I am appealing for a sense of realism in dealing with the Capitalist fact and taking our place within it but not as subservient people but rather as people who are using it to benefit ourselves the way other groups have used it to benefit themselves ... for only with some kind of economic base can we hope to have any kind of real force within this society because ultimately that is what it comes down to: if you do not have an economic base and a political base then you are, essentially, expendable and will be treated as such.

Another point I'd like to make is that I think the struggle for African-Canadian selfhood has to be carried out on a whole series of fronts, it is actually a series of strug-

gles in a series of locations... The economic front is one of the major battlefields just as the educational frontier is another battlefield. There are as many battlefields as there are social activities in this society and it is a mistake to focus on just one of them. People are oppressed on a number fronts and we have to fight on them all at once, we don't have a choice we have to or we're going to be defeated, we have to in order to achieve anything that is going to look like equality

A: I agree with you but when you talk about issues like Black capitalism, I get a little uncomfortable because this is exactly where I pinpoint the contradictions in Afro-Canadian elites that I illustrated in the Austin Clarke reference, particularly because, at the end of the day, what it sounds like to me, is an appeal that borders on a call that would enable Afro-Canadians to exploit themselves within this Capitalist superstructure.

C: I think that is a good point but at the same time my call for realism focuses on the fact that this system does not appear to be trembling, or falling. In fact, Capitalism appears to be fairly confident ....and so we have to arm ourselves...in terms of exploitation we will always be exploited so long as we do not have some base of our own to fall back upon, we will al-

ways be exploited by every other group. The point is that we are participating as consumers in this system anyway, so we might as well participate in such a way as to bring about the most benefits to our community and not simply consumers but also creators of wealth. I mean, the fact that, according to the 1991 census, the most highly educated group of Canadians consist of Black men when measured against the fact that our unemployment rate is quite high in relation to the majority, is in itself telling that there is a problem that needs to be addressed in this way of building your own economic base as well as fighting along other lines. If not you are simply going to remain as cogs in somebody else's machine .. for clearly it is not due to the lack of know-how that we do not have jobs

...our struggle is about how to organize ourselves in order to get our share of the resources, it's about group competition and this whole society is set up on that basis (Quebec is perfect example of this) .. They understand that the whole game of Capitalism is played by groups not played by individuals despite all this talk about individualism because it is really about the support of groups

..Groups enter into the Capitalist structure to benefit themselves yes individuals are in there but these individuals are getting support from and supporting their particular group that they are coming out of this is why nothing comes out of individual achievement for the community at large, that's why nothing trickles down to the commu-

**"Although I know there is an effort particularly during this month, African heritage month, to try to inject a little bit more of Black heritage into the educational system, this is really a band aid approach. It is nice and it is important that this happens but there is so much more that needs to be done." - George Elliot Clarke**

ADMINISTRATION

nity. So we should not be under any illusions that individual success in this kind of system means some kind of group success, it never does and another term for this type of thing is tokenism for even when you do have this, these individuals often feel constrained in the use of their authority, mainly because they do not have this community base of which I'm talking about, they never built one to support any kind of real focus on African-Canadian concerns.

One way of dealing with this came out of an interesting proposal put forward by the 1991 census done here at McGill and that is African-Canadians need to evolve their own Parliament or Assembly. In other words, represent the diversity in the community and also to provide a forum for airing our problems and coming up with solutions for them that would be acceptable to every one .... It would be structured so as to make its leadership responsive and responsible to its grassroots initiatives and this sort of organization is not simply spontaneously in response to or in reaction to the shooting of.. so and so and this is not to downplay responsive action because response is good but

at the same time they have to be much more structured in order to..

A: Affect fundamental change. and it is also long term oriented

C: because it is grounded in the people, having a grassroots sensibility and having a very clear structure like the NAACP in the United States or as serious as a political party. Political parties in this country have been very successful.. in terms of being able to pull through grassroots ideas and at the same time being able to energize those same grassroots to carry out action while having clear leadership and they can change that leadership through review, or what have you.

I see something like that as necessary for African-Canadian revolution as well. That is, a real structure that can survive change, or even the loss of a leader, or change in the political situation, because it is responsive to what people are demanding on the ground, but first people on the ground have to have the clear consciousness about who they are, what they need without facing obscurity or falling into obscurity about what the struggle is, or aims to achieve



# PLANTED IN FROZEN EARTH

## McGILL'S AFRICANA STUDIES COMMITTEE

### CELEBRATES 30 YEARS OF SURVIVAL

BY VERDA COOK

It took over 150 demonstrators, 400 signatures, and a committee before McGill University quietly shuffled away plans to scrap the African Stud-

who made that decision. But looking at the course calendar tells me that we have an African Studies program."

"*Worldliness* is therefore the restoration to such works and interpretations of their place in the global setting, a restoration that can only be accomplished by an appreciation not of some tiny, defensively constituted corner of the world, but of the large many-windowed house of human culture as a whole." -Edward W. Said

ies major.

That was 1994 and the Africana Studies Committee (ASC), originally created as an emergency student initiative, continues to exist. Members are vividly aware, however, that without a continued student spotlight on McGill's 'priorities', African Studies may not survive a New McGill.

"If it weren't for the Committee [ASC] there would be no support from the University for the program. The seminar would not be there, the students would not be there, and the professors would not," says Pohanna Pyne, Event Coordinator of ASC.

African Studies, paralleling the cultural and economic situation of black people in Canada, has now been permitted to exist, but only on the margins of McGill's curriculum. The undergraduate program, the only one of its kind in Canada, celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, without a chair. Outgoing professors are not being replaced, and of the 37 courses listed in the calendar, only 21 are actually offered (a mere 7 of which deal uniquely with Africa and the diaspora). According to Pyne, "What the University is teaching is half-hearted."

Dean of Arts Carmen Miller is not familiar with the 1994 proposal to cut the major. In reference to the proposal, Miller says, "I don't know

The proposal was made by the University's own African Studies Committee. The university asserted insufficient resources, staffing problems and anticipated faculty retirements as their reasons for cutting the major. The decision also coincided with McGill principal Bernard Shapiro's announcement of a 'New McGill'.

Dean Miller explains the lack of university interest in African Studies as a strictly financial issue. "Reduced payments [from the province] means that the Faculty of Arts was forced to cut 3 million dollars out of its budget. The only way we can cut is by cutting staff."

According to the Dean, the University is about to undergo a "restoration process where 1-2% will be put back into programs." A claim ASC heard last year as well. The Dean could not say which programs the money will be funneled back into.

Pyne states that "McGill has never responded with enthusiasm [to African Studies]. Certain figures always say they are supportive. When the principal receives 400 signatures and says thank you and does nothing, that's a gesture."

The student-administration conflict has been part of the history of the African Studies program. The inception of the program coincided

with a year of violent Montréal-wide student clashes with racist university administration. That same year, a walk-in forced the African Studies Association Conference to prioritize the hiring of professors of African descent in the program. 30 years later, there are no full time professors of African descent on faculty.

Professor Aziz Fall, who is presently teaching the program's final seminar, sees the lack of support

for African studies as a political resolution as well. "Africa is not the only area, but as a continent it is very important. All these people are very relevant and important for the University to highlight". He adds "We have the resources, but we are dealing with a lack of political will [on the part of the University] and the fragility of the budget."

Pyne asserts that "Over the past 5 years of our existence the Com-

mittee's initiatives and visions have developed. ASC no longer just wants sustainability for the program."

The committee no longer limits its mandate to discussing curriculum expansion. They are reconsidering the notion of "education," seeking an expansion which would surpass the teaching of ideas. The movement is towards a formation of dialogues which extend beyond the campus.

## A MEMBER OF AFRICANA STUDIES SPEAKS HER MIND

BY POHANNA PYNE

The African Studies program is 30 years old this year. Created in 1969, The African Studies program emerged out of a social and political cry for social change and that of a balanced university education.

Throughout the 60s and 70s African countries were gaining their political independence from the colonial strangle hold, and the smell of change was becoming intoxicating. The shocking violence and injustice of the 'Sir George Williams Affair' was fresh on everybody's mind as well as that of the *Congress of Black Writers* which was held in '68 in the ballroom of the Shatner building. In response to these social changes, McGill added the African Studies program to its curriculum. The University was not unique in its decision. Universities in the U.S. and Europe were also developing their own version of African or African-American based Studies.

Thirty years later the program still exists. That's right - it exists, quite simply. There are no professors or administrators celebrating this anniversary, no banners being hung from the Arts building, no official ceremony congratulating the University on the quality of its education. Why? Because McGill

lacks pride in its purpose. It lacks the sincere intention of quality education. Over the past 30 years the program has not developed to its potential. In 1994, it was even recommended that the program be cut from the curriculum. In response, The Africana Studies Committee (ASC) was formed by members of the Black Students Network (BSN).

Today, the question still remains - Why won't McGill recognize the integral role of African Studies?

What would happen if ASC, read *students*, did not demand that courses pertaining to Africa and the African diaspora be included in the curriculum? "We don't have the money," they say. As a result, courses on Pan-Africanism, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), ECOMOG, (African) philosophy, the African film industry, etc. are deemed impossible.

But the demand is always there - because the desire to learn continuous to exist. African Studies courses such as African-Canadian literature, Peoples and Cultures of Africa, Caribbean Fiction, South African His-

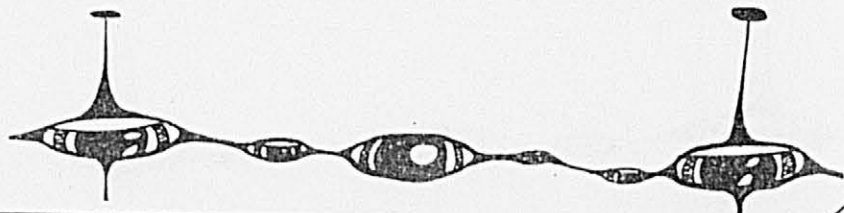
tory, West African History, The Soul and Soul Music, etc. are always packed.

The answer is in promotion.

Many students graduate from McGill never realizing the existence of such a program. Some professors swear it was eliminated years ago. McGill needs to take pride in the potential of a program that directly relates to the University's future.

Celebrating 30 years of African Studies is a celebration of future and its potential. African(a) Studies needs exchange programs with African universities, connections with African, Caribbean and African-Canadian business communities in Montréal, an infrastructure that can welcome leading scholars of African descent, and many other resources.

Most importantly, the program needs vibrant dialogue on how such a program can develop despite financial barriers. If McGill looks it will find the money. If McGill looks it will find scholars to teach. If McGill learns from its past, it will create a program that teaches appreciation for the complexity of "human culture as a whole."





# TURN BACK THE CLOCK

## A LOOK BACK AT MAJOR MOMENTS IN BLACK HISTORY, AS REPORTED BY THE DAILY

**Thursday, October 15, 1959**  
**"Can't Be Helped" Attitude Held By Frats on Segregation Issue"**

The question of segregation in fraternities and sororities met with mixed reaction when prominent fraternity executives were polled by the Daily last night, but the general feeling was that it "couldn't be helped".

In regards to a letter criticizing Panhellenic segregational practices,

situation one member whose chapter at Varsity was involved stated, "It's a shame that a rule originating in the Southern states must affect us in the North but there is apparently nothing we can do."

**Monday, November 22, 1971**  
**"Progress' and East Africa"**

East African political scientist Ahmad Mohiddin returned to McGill Friday after a five-year absence.

"Africans have been oppressed by slavery, imperialism, colonialism, and capitalism," he told an audience of African Studies faculty and students. "It is only through self-reliance that these people can develop themselves."

Mohiddin called for "real economic independence." He showed how East African countries do not have a domestic market and how their economies are geared to the outside. The highly-developed ar-

reas produce cash crops and only for export.

Independent African states which have tried to chart a truly independent course have paid a price. The most glaring case of European economic pressure was the French treatment of Guinea. When Guinea voted for independence in 1958 rather than join the "French community" all French advisors and equipment were

**"...it is an unwritten law that we do not rush Jewish or Negro girls."**

withdrawn, "down to the toilet paper." The departing colonizers destroyed whatever they could not take with them and threw the Guinean economy into a state of chaos.

Mohiddin believes that an African socialism must retain "basic Af-

rican values, like the ideas of obligation to family and respect for elders", and thus affirmed, "We cannot catch up with the developed countries and it is stupid to want to

February 11, the students were besieged by the Riot Squad," and with the communication cut off between the two sides, further negotiation became impossible.

Ninety-six students were arrested,

with the repressive nature of the apartheid regime. It isn't much if McGill divests itself of its financial holdings in South Africa, but any chink in their armor helps."

**Thursday, December 5, 1985**  
**"Racism in the MUC Police"**

Relations between the police and ethnic communities, though not as bad as in the past remain less than ideal.

Many police recruits for the Montréal force come from areas where the minority populations are minuscule, and thus have little experience in dealing with members of minority groups. As Don Phillips of the NDG Black Community Association points out, the recruits often act in accordance to "stereotypes based on media rather than on their own understanding and experience."

Phillips also blames many of the officers for a lack of sensitivity.

"Police have been very arrogant towards Blacks, especially in instances where police have overstepped their bounds and inflicted injuries on Black people".

To ameliorate the difficulties many officers have had in dealing

Kids growing up now are not an immigrant type group. They look at Canada as their home and unless Canada is prepared to accommodate them, there will be serious problems." -Don Phillips, NDG Black Community Association

catch up. Our level of development may not be high, but it will be ours."

**Monday, February 14, 1972**  
**"Black History Week opens"**

Michael Williams, Chairman of the Black Students Union at Sir George Williams University, [now known as Concordia University], opened National Black Week Friday night, with the discussion of events surrounding the February 11, 1969 incident at Sir George.

Reviewing the events which led up to the incident, Williams said that in April 1968, six students signed a complaint accusing Perry Anderson, a Biology professor at Sir George, of discriminating against black students. A hearing was held but it reached no verdict, and over the following summer nothing was done about Anderson. In the fall, several students "took it upon themselves" to publicize the issue and ultimately force the University to take a stand. The University decided, however, that there was no cause for dismissing Anderson on grounds of racism.

The students forced the University to form another committee agreeable to both students and faculty and to hold another hearing. Three professors resigned from the Committee after deciding they were unable to be impartial in their decisions. The administration then, refused to negotiate any further changes to the Committee.

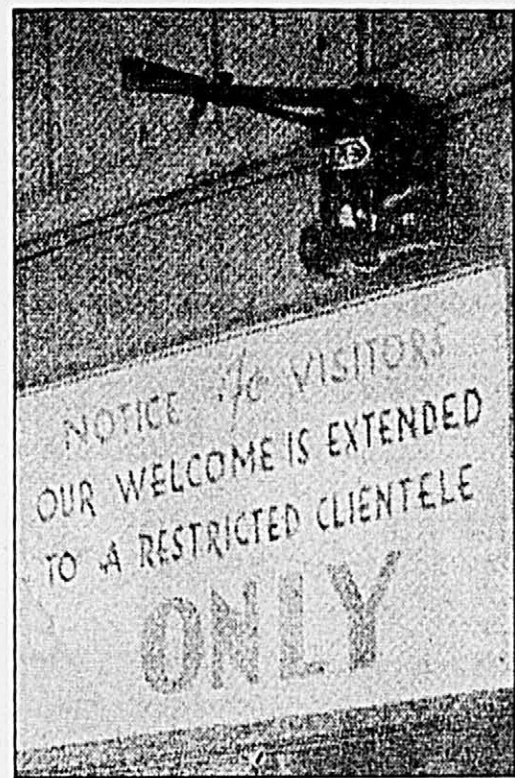
In response, the students began a two-week long occupation of the Computer Centre, with their main demand being a change in the Committee. After two weeks an agreement was reached between the two parties, but the administration went back on it. According to Williams, "on the morning of Feb-

held in jail for two weeks without bail, and when bail was finally given, it was more exorbitant than for "hardened criminals."

Williams explained that of the black students arrested, most were foreigners from the Caribbean, and all these had their passports seized.

**October 10, 1979**  
**"South African Investments questioned"**

If the chairman of the Student's



Council President Judy Klineberg issued the following statement: "We started to write a letter (to the Daily in reply) but could get nowhere with it. There's really nothing that can be done about it (segregation in fraternities). It's the same in other campus organizations, for instance Hillel or the national clubs."

One women's fraternity president was asked to comment on the treatment of the Negro girl by the Toronto chapter of their sorority. She said that her fraternity had voted unanimously in favour of rushing a Negro girl this year but that a bias clause in the constitution of the "central office" of her fraternity prevented rushing non-whites.

Another executive of a "Christian" women's fraternity involved in the Toronto dispute told the Daily that although there was no bias clause for her fraternity "it is an unwritten law that we do not rush Jewish or Negro girls."

Commenting on the Toronto



Council's committee on McGill's investment policies in South Africa has his way, the university will soon be getting out of South African stocks and bonds.

"My goal would be to pull out all economic ties with South Africa," committee chairman Rick Boudreau said.

"This would be a means for McGill to manifest its' displeasure

with ethnic groups the police department began an awareness campaign in the past year. By showing films, such as *Are You a Racist?*, the police department is hoping to alert its members to signs of racism.

Police Chief Gourget has warned, "the police department will take severe disciplinary action against any officer showing a lack of respect for visible minorities."



# 30 YEARS LATER: remembering the Sir George Williams Affair

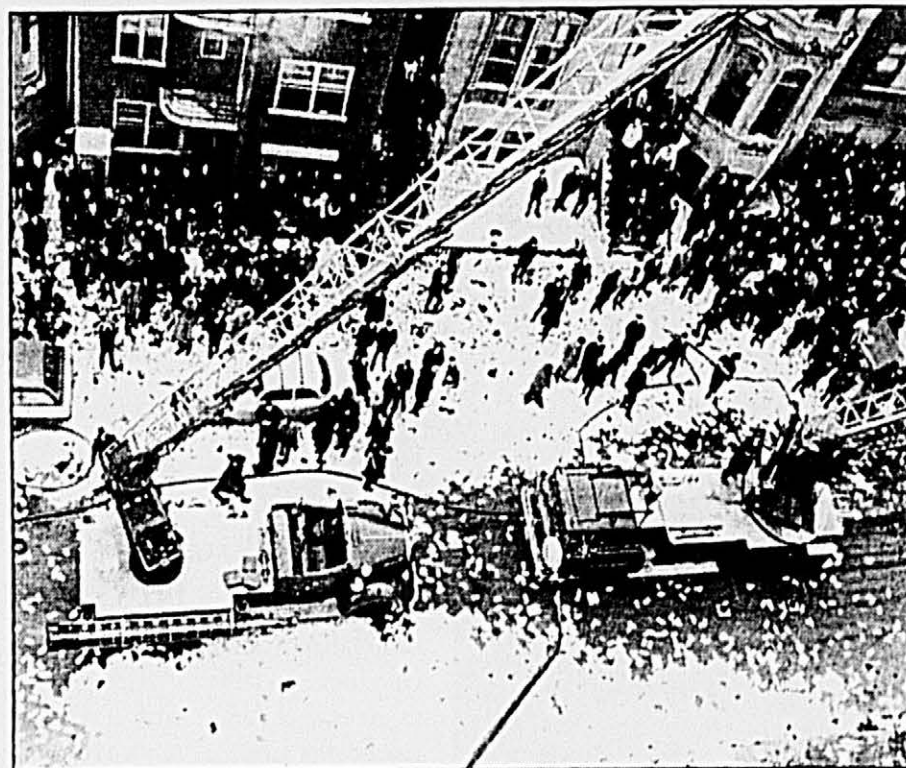
In April 1968, six students signed a complaint accusing Perry Anderson, a Biology professor at Sir George Williams University (now Concordia University), of discriminating against black students. A hearing was held but it reached no verdict, and over the following summer the issue stagnated. In the fall, several students "took it upon themselves" to publicize the issue. The University decided that there was no cause for dismissing Anderson.

The students forced the University to form another committee agreeable to both students and faculty and to hold another hearing. Three professors resigned from the Committee after deciding they were unable to be impartial in their decisions. The administration then, refused to negotiate any further changes to the Committee.

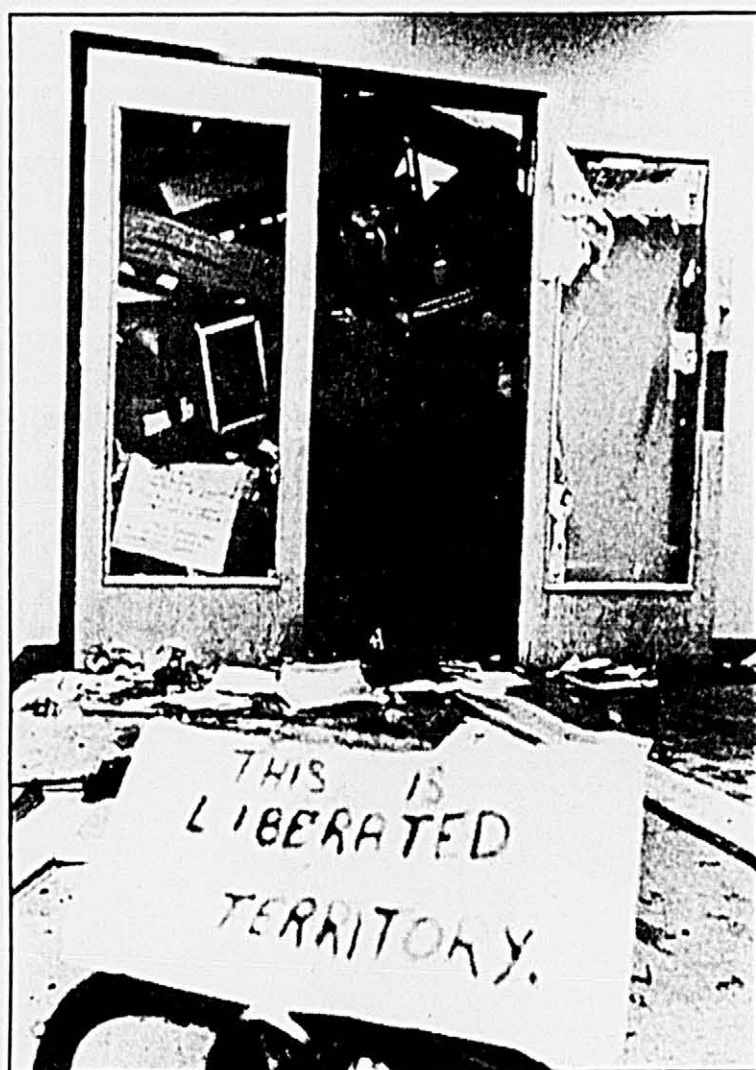
In response, the students began a two-week long occupation of the Computer Centre, with their foremost demand being a change in the Committee. After two weeks an agreement was reached between the two parties, but the administration reneged. On the 11th of February, a riot squad attacked the students, making further dialogue impossible.

Ninety-six students were arrested, held in jail for two weeks without bail.

*photos reprinted courtesy of The Computer Centre Party by Dorothy Eber*



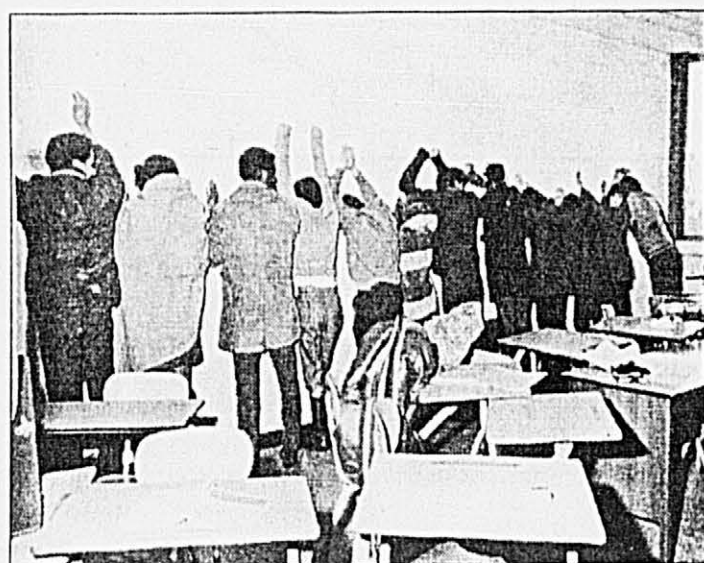
Fire engines outside Sir George Williams University



The barricade at the main entrance to the Computer Centre after the police are resisted in their attempt to enter. Sign in foreground was previously over the door. Still glued to glass door is a sign listing the five demands.



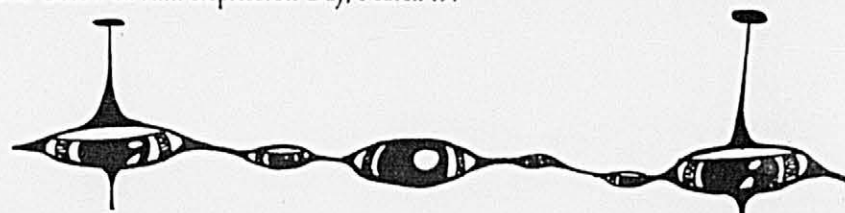
Students leave Computer Centre with hands on heads.



Arrested students up against the wall



McGill Maoists come over to support Sir George Students protesting non-renewal of the contract of Sociology lecturer David Orton on Anti-Repression Day, March 19.





# DIPLOMACY & PAN-AFRICANISM

## SHOULD AFRICAN DIPLOMATS REFLECT A NATIONALIST OR A PAN-AFRICANIST AGENDA?

BY HIRUT EYOB

**W**hat is the mission of African embassies and high commissions in Canada? More specifically, should these offices reflect a Pan-African perspective as opposed to simply that of nationalist? Pan-Africanist issues such as environmentalism, family planning, debt accumulation, and negative portrayal of Africa by Western media directly concern all the countries in Africa and are not specific to one nation as the term 'nationalistic' illustrates.

Individuals perception of the responsibilities of African diplomats in Canada vary cross-culturally. When one lives in near isolation and away from the masses of Black people the notion of blackness and that of Pan-Africanism are paramount. Selom Chapman-Nyaho, a Ghanaian-Canadian, grew up in rural Manitoba and his take of this debate reflects the

multifaceted aspect of black identity "when I identify with Canadian and American blacks [I] reflect Pan-Africanism". However, had he lived in metropolitan Toronto he laments that he would have had a stronger Ghanaian affiliation in which case African diplomats "should reflect a nationalist perspective."

One can argue that it is nearly impossible for a diplomatic office to reflect a Pan-African perspective because Africa is a diverse continent and each state is sovereign. The nature of the diplomat is to promote bilateral trade and cultural exchanges. According to Paul Robert, a Quebecois lawyer, there are specific arenas to voice continental concerns "Africans should go through international organizations such as the *United Nations* or the *Organization of Afri-*

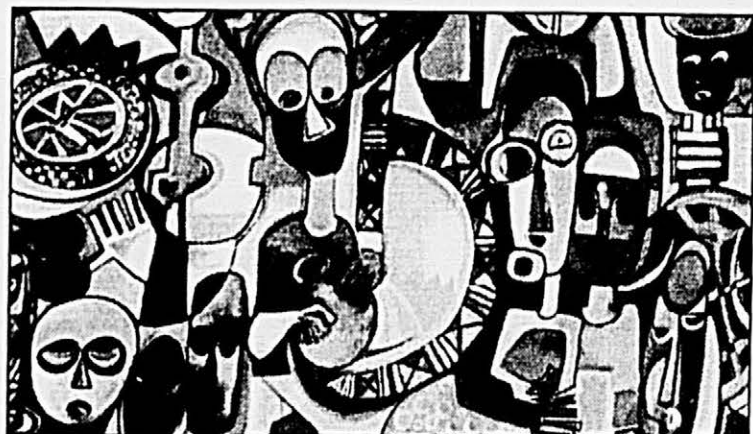
*can Unity* but not at the local level here."

Yet diplomacy, under Pan-Africanism, can contribute to rein-

"When I identify with Canadian and American blacks [I] reflect Pan-Africanism."

forcing or changing views, ideas, perceptions and images that Canadians have about Africa and Africans. Eli Bitzer, South Africa's counsel in Montreal, believes that his office not only should reflect a Pan-Africanist position but that it does, "when the political changes occurred in South Africa we were in a sense readmitted to our continent. When that happened we immediately indicated that our very first priority is towards Africa. After that to South-South co-operation... We want to assist our continent in the way we can and we want to rely on our continent. So, we are very much underlying our Africanism."

It is difficult to have a Pan-Africanist agenda because the mandate of the offices here are to represent that of their government's foreign policy back in Africa. Indeed, not every country has President Nelson Mandela's vision to do away with the geographical and other divides, nor the financial resources to transform that into reality.



## BLACK FACT

1999 marks one hundred years since the beginning of The Philippine-American War (1899-1916). Many black volunteers and soldiers were against the war, a dozen of them actually defected to the Filipino insurgents. These soldiers who were part of the all black "buffalo soldiers" had radical and ideological sympathy for people of colour. The war in the Philippines was an unholy war of conquest.

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Graduate Studies and Research

## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

### Carrie M. Derick Award For Graduate Teaching And Supervision

Nominations are invited for the first annual Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching and Supervision, to be conferred to a professor who has taught at McGill at the graduate level for at least three years, is currently involved in graduate student training, and who is within the first twelve years of his/her career as a university academic.

Nomination forms and terms can be obtained from the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies, Room 308, Dawson Hall (phone: 3991, fax: 8257).

**Deadline for nominations:**  
Wednesday, March 31, 1999.



Graduate Studies and Research

## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

### David Thomson Award For Excellence In Graduate Supervision And Teaching

Nominations are invited for the sixth annual David Thomson Award for Excellence in Graduate Supervision and Teaching. To be eligible, a professor must have taught at the graduate level at McGill for a minimum of three years and must be currently involved in graduate student training. Professors should be nominated for their excellence in supervision and teaching of graduate students. Coordination of graduate programs will also be taken into account.

Nomination forms and terms can be obtained from the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies, Room 308, Dawson Hall (phone: 3991, fax: 8257).

**Deadline for nominations:**  
Wednesday, March 31, 1999.



# POETICS

## How Far Have We Come

How far have we come as a people  
 Since the days of Gravey and King.  
 When our vision was blurred like in the Color Purple  
 And we could freely dance and sing  
 Against the wicked ones who used power wrongly.  
 Remember how the panther struck back the weak pig?  
 In the day and night when danger roamed silently.  
 Cats like Newton, Cleaver and Seale removed the wig  
 Of politics in the land of the free and the brave.  
 Why must my brothers still suffer in pain and in death?  
 N.D.C cases left unsolved as mothers cry, "Save  
 our sons and daughters" who have fallen and lost faith  
 In the Protector of this home, our place.  
 Who am I? Just one Black man with one face.

Cedric Gordon

Weaned off milky fantasies  
 Aborted from the park  
 I be riding tricycles  
 in circles, after dark.

I am playing kiss and tell  
 in a deadly way  
 waiting for my test results  
 on bright sunny days

I'm dressed up in mama's clothes  
 to have tea with my dolls  
 fabric stretched on adult hips  
 this costume now too small

Time is chasing visions  
 years go by in days  
 these little games of make belief  
 now impossible to play

I be riding tricycles  
 in circles, after dark.

I was playing hide and seek  
 and no one sought me out.  
 anonymous

## Witchcraft Confessions

A soiled people. Bound.  
 I saw you in a crushed form of a father.  
 Mama telling too distant images of Time,  
 Outgrown children chained to a Wall  
 separating them from misty destinies.  
 It is Night.

Masked men move in silent flight.  
 Fiercer still in chalky face.  
 Owls "who" to the dense bush.  
 Moons know what fills the mad.  
 Night.

A time to rearrange the mirage  
 "3 parrots eggs  
 A calabash  
 and a male fowl's beak!"

Night recipes  
 for animystic spells  
 at the Crossroads  
 to flash electric bursts on the Invisible  
 or quick cracks in the Wall,  
 or brief splits from the whitewash.  
 For it is Night

And Her restless children roam Earth.

Akinwunmi.

## For Young Afro-Canadian Poets who contemplate suicides Goddanse

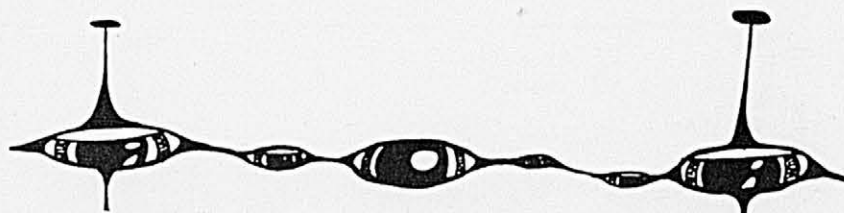
Heads clutched in spasms of piercing truths,  
 Agony bleeding psyches,  
 Ghosts of barbed insights....

To rouse  
 is tormentingly painful, yes, and sad.....

Yet not so sad that  
 men should bend to beasts,  
 or trace the eye back to the Sun's source,  
 or fly from the cliff...

Try, try, try  
 to remember.....

Akinwunmi





Revolution

Bwoy mi friend  
 revolution come to end  
 di left is di rights right hand man  
 an tonight I will curl up in front of my tube  
 and watch Jerry Springer, Ally Mcbeal, & Friends  
 So I could feel a part of society  
 my priority to sport my new Nike  
 cause mi friend, revolution come to an end

But wait  
 what kinda helpless hopeless state  
 dem have we di people ina  
 saying we have no power to affect change  
 But that we do have di dollar  
 to buy cocacola, mcdonalds, levis, pepsi, tommy hilfiger,  
 nautica, nike, ralph lauren, and d.k.n.

why do they try so hard to distract we  
 from di harsh reality of livin in a "bleep up" society  
 we both know whos truly financially backing capitalism  
 brothers and sisters feeling naked without tables of lables

But mi frien  
 revolution come to an end  
 di left is di rights right han man  
 an tonight I will lie down in front the tube  
 and watch geraldo, ricki lake, and jerry springer  
 so I could feel a part of society...

But how revolution fi dun  
 when you walk around down town  
 yuh nuh si di urban slum  
 beside di soho a slo mo begs some change  
 "spare some change please"  
 passers by pass him by  
 keep your eye, straight ahead

how revolution fi dun  
 when beside di Disney store, a socalled whore  
 is a sex trade worker, woman of colour, single mother,  
 trying to make a dollar, standing on the corner

how revolution fi dun  
 when ina dis ya state  
 fi wi drop out rate  
 way too high fi mention  
 an unda di tension  
 we bob our heads to commercial gansta rap

by debbie young

kill each other off  
 laawd

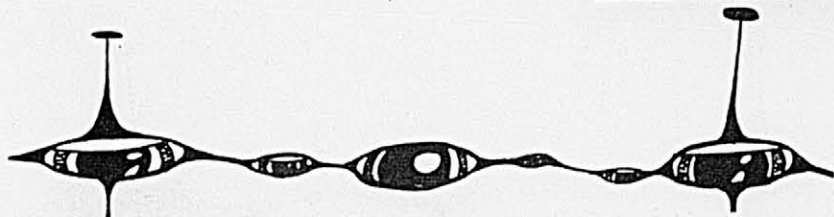
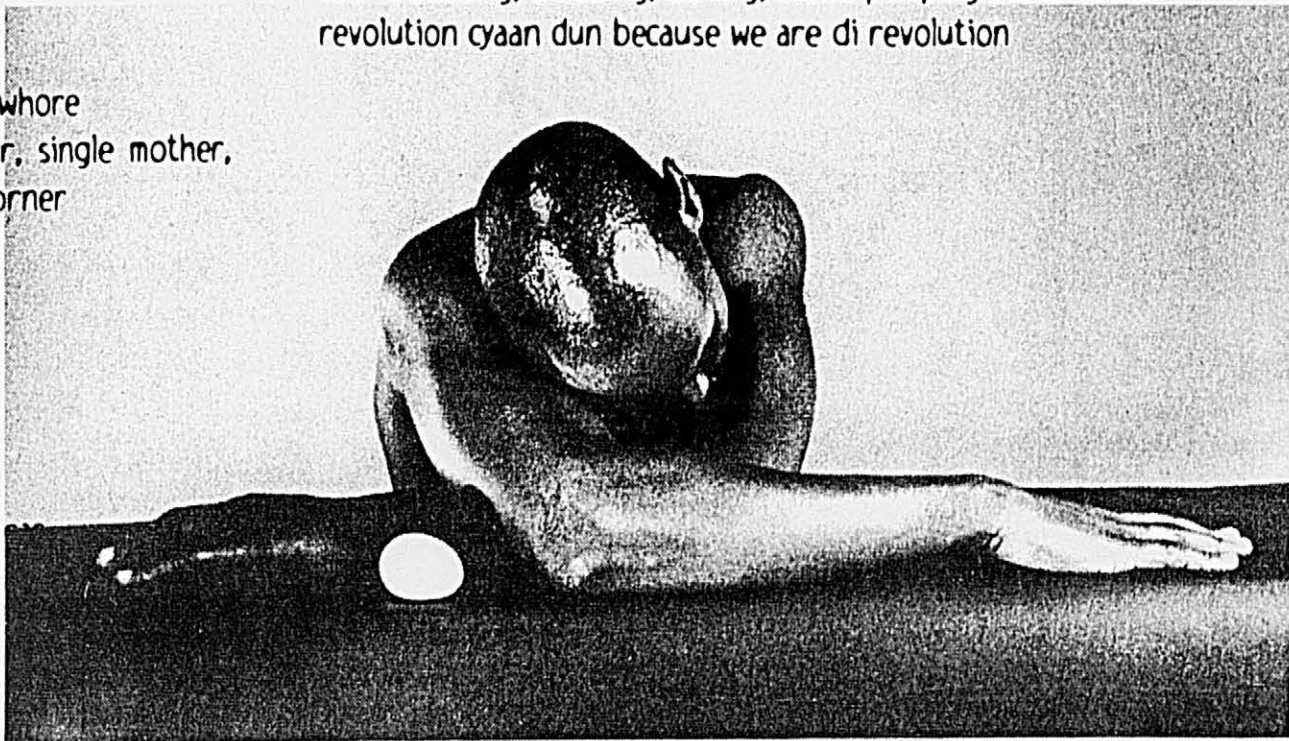
mi friend  
 revolution come to an en  
 di left is di right's right han man  
 and tonight  
 I will curl up and lie down in front di tube  
 an watch  
 all my children, the bold and di beautiful  
 an di young an di restless  
 but I am young an restless  
 yes  
 so revolution cyaan dun  
 no not yet

our foremothers & fathers comitted to a struggle, they never lie  
 down, curl up, or get too comfortable anywhere

Asata Shakur, Amilcar Cabral, Franz Fanon, Che Guevera, Steve Biko,  
 Fidel, Castro, Stokely Carmical, Bobby Hill, Angela Davis  
 and di list, di list goes on

I want to watch them, breath them, feel them  
 my revolution friends

Revolution cyaan dun, you, me you, you, you  
 feel it beating, bleeding, boiling, blood pumping ina wi veins  
 revolution cyaan dun because we are di revolution



POETICS



# BLACK TALK

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH ON THE FM WAVELENGTH

BY AMAL GODATALLA

In their efforts to raise consciousness about Black issues, the Black Students Network (BSN) of McGill University decided to look for a new avenue of communication and information. They found in McGill's Radio Station CKUT 90.3 a medium through which to share thoughts, feelings and concerns more directly with a wide variety of interested listeners. This began a tradition known as *Black Talk* that, since 1991, occurs on one day during Black History Month. *Black Talk* is dedicated not just to history but current social and cultural issues, stories and music.

Adrian Harewood, Station Manager of CKUT who has been involved with *Black Talk* ever since his days at McGill's BSN, says that *Black Talk* was initially a Student Activity. "The aim was to focus on issues in the Montréal Black Community and more generally, on Blacks in the world, while presenting it in a way that allows others to participate as well."

Gradually, *Black Talk* extended into a Community event, where people of all different cultural backgrounds (African, West Indian etc.), regions of the city, and even age groups are involved. It is especially enriching for youth, providing a media for learning and exploration. By attending meetings, suggesting ideas, sources and topics they would like to discuss and plan for the actual event while contributing to their own personal growth.

The event itself is a different experience depending on the participants. Joan Mazimhaka, who first joined to help a friend during her program by managing the phone lines, says that what appealed to her was that the event was "very interactive." Ayesha Wharton, who is from Trinidad says, "I met a lot of people actually from Montréal and that gave me a sense of community. What I enjoyed most was the preparation and the brain storming for interesting topics, the questioning and surfacing of new issues to be discussed - especially ones not normally discussed, such as homophobia or even hair politics. The discussions during the day were thought provoking and intriguing, still I thought there could be more participation from the public. In the end I found the actual day not long enough."

I spoke with Anne Harewood, a coordinator on the *Black Talk* committee since 1995 and of the show *Soul Perspective*, about the significance of having *Black Talk* as a full day radio show versus having a series of shorter programs during Black History Month. She states that "While present Black History Month programming at CKUT gives the opportunity for the regular and non-regular listeners to enjoy the incorporated information into the everyday shows, the programmers for *Black Talk* agree that a single day for focus on black issues collectively is essential. It is rare to have such an

exclusive day for Black topics and to have members of the community and university cooperating together. For many it is a day to look forward to. Also, most of the regular programs have been willing to contribute their spots for a cause that will benefit others - the same way I would give up my show for Women's Day or AIDS Awareness Day."

According to Adrian Harewood, "the radio provides a unique and flexible medium of endless possibilities, where you can create sounds, hear voices and music, and use it to communicate and educate others. It is also a crossroads of different worlds. The station creates a window to the Student life which can become easily limited to the campus without the chance to appreciate the city of Montréal and the local Montréalers who does not get a feel of the University life."

In the end the goal of CKUT is to provide a voice to the voiceless; in the case of *Black Talk*, making that voice clear and accessible to everyone.

For those interested in getting involved or tuning in, *Black Talk* will be held this year on the 28th of February.

Topics for this year's *Black Talk* include:

A Tribute to Duke Ellington. A documentary on his life, in memory of his 100th anniversary this year.

Black Domestic Workers show. This show will discuss the immigration policies concerning workers, the working conditions in the past and the current times.

History of Jazz in Montréal. An interview with Charles Biddles and some of the prominent jazz musicians from the Montréal scene. Featuring local Montréal jazz music.

A discussion on the book "The Racial Contract."

A Profile on the musician Billy Strayhorn.

Report on the Sir George William Affair that occurred in Concordia in memory of its 30th anniversary. It was an event that had international coverage, when students protested racial injustice towards blacks in the university. Featuring an interview with Professor Robert Hill from UCLA, who was in Montréal at the time.

History of Sample based Music. Its origins and predecessors from Funk, Soul etc.

Blacks in the Criminal Justice system. Discussions with inmates about conditions, their experiences, and a session with their spiritual ad-

visor.

A tribute to Thomas Sankara. The revolutionary leader of Burkina Faso who was assassinated in 1983.

Discussion on the topic: "What does it mean to be Black and Canadian in the new millennium?" This issue, not often discussed, will focus on the influences of the African-American culture on the Black Canadian youth. This includes fashion, television, music, historical figures and how familiar they are with the African-American culture.

A discussion on the book *Capitalism and Slavery* by Dr. Eric Williams, one of the Prime Ministers of Trinidad and Tobago. The book was first published in 1976 and republished in 1998.

Feature on the History of Soca and Calypso Music.

CKUT RADIO MCGILL  
90.3 FM  
3647 UNIVERSITY ST.  
MONTREAL, QUE., H3A-2B3  
514.398.6787  
FAX 398.8261



## Black History Month

# ACTIVITIES

Thursday 18

**Racial Minorities and Systematic Racism in the Public Service** 1:30 pm

This information session explains the state of systematic racism in the Federal Department of Health in Ottawa

CRARR

info: 939-3342 \$25 (\$10)

**Show Girls** 7 pm

A movie celebrating Montréal's legendary black jazz scene from 1920 to 1960.

Union United Church 3007 Delisle

info: 932-8731 Free

**Artistes afro-americains** 7:30

pm Maison de la Culture Cote-des-Neiges 5290, Chemin de la Cote des Neiges

info: 872-6889 Free with pass

Friday 19

**Le rôle des femmes dans la lutte contre l'esclavage** 6:30 pm

A debate on the contribution of women in the fight against slavery.

Regroupement General des Senegalais 1200, rue Bleury

info: 281-6765 Voluntary donation

Saturday 20

**Haiti/Oumar** 2 pm

Haiti: a documentary on the Haitian community in Québec. Discussion will follow.

Centre Communautaire St-Noel Chabanel 8555, boul. Levesque. St-Francois, Laval

info: (450) 665-7114

**New Canadian Kid** 4 pm

(Theatre) The thoughts and fears of a child while he goes through his adaptation process.

3007 Delisle

info: 486-4423

\$2

**Mayi moulén et Poutine** 6 pm

Brainstorm, eat, and listen to some live Hai-

tian music. Cultural identity and a historical overlook of the black community.

7355, Christophe Colomb

info: 723-2723 \$12 general/ \$9 students

**Celebration of a Nation** 6:30 pm

Youth variety show.

4065 Jean Talon W.

info: 737-8229 Free

**Kanda Bongo Man** 8 pm

Soukous musician and dancer. 316, Ste-Catherine ouest

info: 866-4424 \$15

**Sounds of Blackness** 8 pm

An award show for artistic accomplishment in Montréal. Live performances.

1594 rue St-Denis

info: 843-7936 \$30

**Music Festival** 8 pm

5851 Somerland

info: 735-2232 \$12 (\$8)



## daily classifieds

Ads may be placed through the Daily Business Office, Room B-07, University Centre, 9h00-14h00. Deadline is 14h00, two working days prior to publication. McGill Students & Staff (with valid ID): \$4.75 per day, 3 or more consecutive days, \$4.25 per day. General Public: \$6.00 per day, or \$5.00 per day for 3 or more consecutive days. Extra charges may apply, prices include applicable GST or PST. Full payment should accompany your advertising order and may be made in cash or by personal cheque (for amounts over \$20 only). For more information, please visit our office or call 398-6790. WE CANNOT TAKE CLASSIFIED ADS OVER THE PHONE. PLEASE CHECK YOUR AD CAREFULLY WHEN IT APPEARS IN THE PAPER. The Daily assumes no financial responsibility for errors, or damages due to errors. Ad will re-appear free of charge upon request if information is incorrect due to our error. The Daily reserves the right not to print any classified ad.

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